

Saturday Night In The Log Cabin

Helgdagskväll I Timmerkojan

Hence, yearning and weakness from soot-blackened breasts,
No more cares in our snow-covered home.
We have fire, we have meat, we have liquor for guests,
There is peace in the deep forest gloam.
Sing, Björnberg's Jon, with your full-throated calls
Of love and of roses and springs!
String your fiddle, Brogren, and play us a waltz
To eerie blue moon-lighted things.

It is miles upon miles to the houses in snow,
The frost lingers sullenly there.
Here is fun in the log fire's yellow glow
That trembles in midnight air.
You are fair, O Brogren, in fire and flame
As you play on your black violin.
For food and for liquor, forgotten the shame —
And your forehead is free from its sin.

When the stars of the morning grow feeble and die
And the vapors are turning to freeze,
And the dawn is on moor and water and sky
We'll slumber in freedom and ease.
We are sleeping on branches of soft fir and pine
And dreaming of pale maidens' eyes.
Then we turn, and our snoring is manly and fine
While the log fire is crumbling, and dies.

Dan Andersson

English translation: Martin S. Allwood

Old Man Noah

Gubben Noach

Old Man Noah,
Old Man Noah,
Brother, what a kid!
When he quit the round ark
He planted on the ground, hark!
Lots of wine, yes,
Lots of wine, yes,
This is what he did.

Noah rowed out,
Noah rowed out,
From his ancient ark.
Bottles he was smelling,
Such as they are selling,
To be drinking,
To be drinking,
In his new-made park.

Well he knew that,
Well he knew that
Human beings are
Thirsty by their nature
Like the other creature,
So he planted,
So he planted,
Wine both near and far.

Lady Noah,
Lady Noah,
What a corking pal!
She gave Noah liquor,
Had I such a flicka,
I would marry,
I would marry,
Straightaway that gal.

She'd not tell him,
She'd not tell him,
Daddy, watch your step!
Put away that liquor!
No, the booze got thicker
And old Noah,
And old Noah,
Boy — how full of pep!

Carl Michael Bellman
English translation: Inga Wilhelmsen Allwood,
Sven Hamrell and Martin S. Allwood.

A Ballad Of The French King's Bandsmen

En Ballad Om Franske Kungens Spelmän

From Burgundy we come and from Guienne,
From Brabant, and the green realm of Normandy.
We have never seen those pleasant lands again
Since we drumméd for King Charles's Company.
When the Snowy Alps defied us Sounded "Come!
With our Oriflamme to guide us On to Rome!"
In the blue Italian air Waved our standards everywhere —
Lo, their Tuscany a lily-field in bloom!

We have music for the march and for the ball,
Droning litanies and lays of Charlemagne;
We can sound the clavichord and virginal,
Hymns to dawn, and old romances of Bretagne.
We have rhymes of Blanchefleur And Herr Ploris,
And refrains about the Sieur De la Palice;
And the Pope his blessings gave On the Courtesans' conclave
To the tune of our "Les Dames du Temps Jadis."

We blow, and keep in time, and thump the drums,
Spite of swelléd cheeks and fast-increasing girth:
Still from us the call to Boot and Saddle comes,
Though the Maréchals we followed rest in earth.
Beneath vict'ry-waving lances We appear,
Or at festive torchlight dances Here and there;
And we still go marching by With our bonnets cocked awry,
And our burial-equipment in the rear.

Guelph and Ghibelline and Pope have been the prey
That we harried till their glory sank to shame.
Many Captains have we followed, till the day
When the crepe-teamed carriage finally for them came.
For our uniforms' renewing Year by year,
From great Houses fall'n in ruins Do we bear
Liv'ries famed at many a feast — Black of Milan, green of Este,
Red of Borgia, like the Pope his daughter's hair.

Is a woman left that minds us in Guienne?
Blows the spring still green in ancient Normandy?
We have never seen those pleasant lands again:
To Rome we go with Frundsberg's Company.
Twixt Oriflamme and sabre March we on!
For d'Orange we strike the tabor, And Bourbon;
And whate'er in our advance We thought worthy of our glance
We have transubstantiated to a song.

Frans G. Bengtsson
English translation: C. D. Locock.

In Arendorff's Time

På Arendorffs Tid

In Arendorff's time,
That's when life was sublime,
And the stars weren't so hard to get at.
There was joy and delight.
Were you locked up one night?
There was nothing peculiar in that.
It was class — though at times one's apparel
Was all rags, and one dwelt in a barrel.
And though famished and cold
One did not lose one's hold.
There was nothing peculiar in that.

Now existence is hard
In the street and the yard,
And saloons, where one formerly sat.
One sits silently, just
Like a log or a bust.
Well then, what's so peculiar in that?
But in Arendorff's time one had entry
And one mingled with barons and gentry.
Were you sassy, you lout,
You were soon booted out.
There was nothing peculiar in that.

There were good years, for fair,
But with plastered down hair
Standardizing has altered all that,
And the new rules are these:
You're as like as two peas.
Well then, what's so peculiar in that?
One is docile with taxes and hand-outs,
Though one never is classed with the stand-outs.
Now existence is flat
Like a sat-upon hat.
I see nothing peculiar in that.

Yes, one lives and one tears
At the body one wears,
And one day one lies prone on the mat.
One is moved on one's back
In a broken-down hack.
There is nothing peculiar in that.
And some birdsong would sure be a blessing,
For the trip wouldn't seem so depressing
Though the words of the priest
Are the poorest and least.
There is nothing peculiar in that.

Nils Ferlin
English translation: Thorild Fredenholm

Backafall Lassie

Flicka Från Backafall

Backafall Lassie, the schooner Three Brothers
Cruising tonight the Caribbean Sea,
And there's land wind that blows from the southern
Coast up the island, past home in the lea.
Fragrance of sweet scents the evening air hallows,
But I'd give all the sweet scents back again,
If I could stroll through the Backafall mallows
With the old moon keeping guard over Hven.

Ellen, I cannot come home in the May night,
Then I shall still have the Line in the north.
But as you stand by the church in the twilight
Fancy I come like a cockchafer forth,
Who without leave touches lightly your shining
Hair — while your sweet little hands it pursue,
And finds its way down below your blouse lining,
While the old moon in the sky watches you.

For the intruder would only be feeling
If your round breasts are like mallows in bloom
Each time you know that my thoughts have been stealing
Home from their guard in the hurricane's boom.
Feel that it's only your boy who is sending
Greetings that once as a captain again
Back to the Backafall shores he'll be wending
With the old moon keeping guard over Hven.

Gabriel Jönsson

English translation: Martin S. Allwood

Jonah's Voyage

Jone Havsfärd

SEE the ship at anchor tossing —
Soon for Tarsus she'll be crossing —
And the skipper leaps on deck and cries, "The West blows steadily:
So each able-bodied seaman
Now must leave his little leman
And exchange his woodland turtle-dove for the gulls of the salt sea!" —
Then behold o'er the briny waves the good ship depart,
Through the tackle-ropes and rigging see the tiny dalesmen dart,
And the warrior backward tipping
Neck to deck, and shyly sipping
Under cover of the foresail, is the Captain, glad at heart.

Now the trolls of sky and ocean
Spit and growl, and mid the motion
Sinks the skipper's friendly comforter in gulfs of the wild sea.
Then in wrath he cries, "I'm thinking
We are practically sinking:
Who's our bulkiest? we must over with some Talents two or three." —
Then behold there Jonah, that most reputable man!
He is portly, as is fitting, and his girth is great to scan;
He looks pale and far from well — he
Keeps his hand upon his belly —
One sees he's feeling deadly sick and pining for the land.

Then spake the Prophet, saying,
"Friends, for mercy hear me praying,
For a spiritual man am I, a Prophet without peer."
"Hast thou faith," they say, "then surely
Thou canst walk the waves securely,
Nay, thine own hulk might sustain thee, O thou prophet-profiteer!" —
Then behold him bobbing in the waters up and down,
While the frock-coat floating round his neck reveals his undergown:
And in the depths right under
We behold a gaping wonder,
And terribly from its great jaws the gleaming dentures frown.

O ye landsmen free and happy,
Ye who never meet those snappy
Grisly monsters that go roaring thro' the Ocean's rocking dark,
Do ye ever give a thought to
Such a doom — indeed ye ought to —
As the mariner's, ingested by the Whale or by the Shark ? —
For behold, here's Jonah in the belly of the whale!
You can see he'd fain be out of it — he looks so deathly pale;
Bare his cabin, low the ceiling,
There is scarcely room for kneeling,
And the atmosphere is icy-cold and pestilent and stale.

Now the Scriptures tell us plainly
How he 'scaped that beast ungainly,
Though many a day and many a night together they did fare:
But they give no intimation
Of his frock-coat's transformation
By the whale's teeth to a waistcoat very much the worse for wear. —
So behold, walks Jonah on the green and flowery strand!
How he smiles to see "Ye Antient Fisch" hard by at his left hand!
For he needs a little sup with
That salt fish to finish up with —
And the same good luck I wish to every youngster in our land.

Erik Axel Karlfeldt
English translation: C. D. Locock

The Sea Voyage Of Jonah

Jone Havsfärd

See the ship at anchor riding,
Under verdant headlands hiding,
And the skipper shouting on the deck: "Blow, west wind, blow away!"
Hey, ye bos'ns and ye yeomen,
It is time to quit your roamin'
And exchange your turtle doves for seagulls o'er the salty spray.
Here we see the noble vessel plowing through the brine,
With the native Dalecarlians in charge of block and line,
While behind a sail on deck
With a backward tilted neck —
Lo! The captain has a few for luck and feels uncommon fine.

But the beasts of all creation
Spew and howl their indignation,
So the rattled skipper drops his bottle in the roaring sea.
And he cries: "The ship will founder!
We must jettison some bounder!
Let's toss overboard our fattest man, whoever he may be."
Over there stands Jonah, most respectable of men,
Although somewhat chubby, as behoves a solid citizen.
Oh, his face is very white —
How he holds his belly tight!
He is doubtless sick and wishes he were back ashore again.

And they grab him without heeding
His insistent, frantic pleading:
"Can't you see I am a prophet and a holy man at that!"
But they answer: "Where you're heading
You can practice water treading
Though undoubtedly you'll float, O prophet, on your priestly fat!"
Upside down is Jonah in the midst of his descent
With his frock coat round about his head and flapping like a tent.
In the horrid depths below
We behold a double row
Of the gaping monster's gleaming teeth on bloody murder bent.

As to farmers, I might mention
That they have no comprehension
Of the evil creatures lurking in the ocean's slimy dark.
And they would do well to ponder
On the fate of seamen yonder
Who are often swallowed by some predatory whale or shark.
Here we see poor Jonah in the belly of the whale;
He is sicker now than ever, and his face is deathly pale.
We can understand his feeling,
It is cramped and low of ceiling,
He can't even straighten up, our prophet, in this smelly jail.

But we know the good book's story:
How he fled his purgatory
After days of drifting far and wide upon the churning brine.
And the monster's jaws in shutting Did a proper job of cutting,
Making of his frock a jacket ripped into unique design.
Here we see our Jonah strolling on the verdant shore,
He is smiling sweetly at a sign above a swinging door.
Jonah climaxes the tale
Toasting heartily the whale,
And I wish the same for everyone and many, many more.

Erik Axel Karlfeldt
English translation: Thorild Fredenholm.

Beatrice-Aurore

In Stockholm town at Kornshamnstorg
In Hallbeck's second-hand book store,
I bought an ancient dream-book once,
Composed in days of yore.

Then I lay dreaming all last night
Of Beatrice-Aurore.

She was a one time love of mine
Whom I lost long before.

She stood so close, she took my hand.
She told me: "Come to me."
At once I understood and knew —
My only love was she.

We wandered down a linden walk,
I wept and I was sad.
The autumn leaves were wet and sere,
And yet my heart was glad.

We walked and held each other's hand.
Like children's were our words.
And then we reached a quaint old mill
With many singing birds.

I said: "Will you be mine alone,
Say, Beatrice-Aurore?"
"Then catch me if you can," she cried
And left me at the door.

And I ran in and searched and searched
In every nook around,
And cried, but Beatrice-Aurore
Was nowhere to be found.

I woke up crying bitterly
And in my heart a sting.
And in my dream-book then I searched,
But there was not a thing.

Harriet Löwenhjelm
English translation: Martin S. Allwood

The Finest Love-Song

Den Vackraste Visan Om Karleken

The finest love-song written
No eyes ever read.
It came in a dream at Montmartre
To a poor young student's bed.

That song should have lighted the kingdoms,
Forced Spring to her knees to pray;
And a world to its heart should have taken
A new Musset.

With a new Lucille should he wander —
Pale, slender, with blue eyes bright —
Making rondos of roses and kisses
In the April night.

The finest love-song written
No eyes ever read;
It lies in a grave in Flanders,
Mid piled up heaps of the dead.

Ture Nerman
English translation: C. D. Locock

The Finest Of All The Love Songs

Den Vackraste Visan Om Karleken

The finest of all of the love songs
no eyes ever read.
It was left in a dream at Montmartre
by a poor young student's bed.

That song would have shone o'er the nations,
forced spring to her knees to pray;
and a world to its heart would have taken
a new, a new Musset.

Along the old quays he'd have wandered
there with a pale little blue-eyed Lucile —
and whispering of violets and kisses sweet
through the April night still.

The finest of all of the love songs
no eyes ever read.
It lies in a graveyard in Flanders
with a student from Paris dead.

Ture Nerman

English translation: Martin S. Allwood and John Hollander

The Coming Of Ghostly Death

Bleka Dödens Minut

So the hour is now past,
And thou comest at last,
While my doorway with pine-twigs they strew,
And my curtains of green
Floral-pattern sateen,
Sewn close lest the daylight come through;
And my fingers are clasping a rose
(Though for scents I've no sense in my nose): —
Yea, the hour is now past,
And thou comest at last,
While I hide here so shyly from view.

Starched folds everywhere —
So icy their glare;
The candlesticks (hired for the day)
Shed the feeblest of light
On a fringe like the night,
The blackest from over the way.
And a gleam of white faces in tears
Like mist-hidden roses appears: —
Starched folds everywhere —
So icy their glare,
When the Scythe-bearer comes for his prey.

To the bells' clanging din
The tureen is brought in,
On a cloth starched to azure — so clean !
On the water-jug's glass
Through the curtains may pass
From the pale sun a gold-yellow sheen.
Dress-coats round "the relics" appear,
And a moth-paper scent fills the air: —
To the bells' clanging din
The tureen is brought in,
Glazed stoneware in flowers and green.

Soon chilled lies the room,
Mid the trestle's draped gloom,
Chilled, draughty and wretchedly bare;
And a leaf, gone astray
From some wreath, blows away
Through the window now wide to the air.
Heavy footsteps are heard in the snow,
While the bells toll dreary and slow: —
Now chilled lies the room,
Mid the trestle's draped gloom
And the bier-cloth that hangs on a chair.

Too much bother indeed —
There's so little I need!
Far better, far simpler, to fall
Like a leaf to the ground
That goes eddying round
Till it rests in the dust by the wall:
Where the rains and the frosts turn it white,
Till it crumbles to fragments one night: —
Too much bother indeed —
So little I need
Of their ringing and singing and all!

Nay, but if you can spare
Just a rose, put it there
On my grave where the green grasses grow:
When the song of the bird
In the woodland is heard
Mid the warmth of the glad summer's glow
Then, if vanishing fingers can blow
You a kiss — they will do it, I know!
As a butterfly sips
It shall light on your lips,
Mid the crosses and white shells below.

Birger Sjöberg
English translation: C.D. Locock

Frida's Spring-Cleaning

Frida I Vårstädningen

Surely something angel-like is glowing
Round my Frida's head, you must admit!
Where Spring's curtains in the breeze are blowing,
Mark the twinkling of her tiny feet.
Noise nor din attends not her progression,
No more sound than wind among the sedge;
Yet she has no place — how goes the expression? —
On the social ladder's topmost ledge.

How she lends to such an operation,
Dull and homely, that celestial tone,
Science may devise some explanation,
I, who love her, cannot think of one.
See how busily she scrubs and scours,
Dries the crystals of the chandelier,
Yet preserves her sheen of summer flowers,
Gleam of wave that glitters on the mere.

Winter's wadding, off she clears, and gladly,
Sees the window-pane made clean at last.
Now the copper vase — which wants it badly —
Gets a rub from fingers flying fast.
"Charles the Twelfth's Last Journey," just above it,
Next she cleans, humming a "Boston" air;
How the blue-clad bodyguard would love it,
Felt they the soft touch of hands so fair!

While the merry gusts of Spring are raising
Music, and the roof-wires ring and clash,
On its shelf the china cat sits gazing
Thoughtfully on Frida's splash and dash.
Soon the nimble fingers take a fresh hold,
Nail those famed devices to the wall:
"Leave your tragic thoughts beneath the threshold,"
"Hang your hats and jackets in the hall!"

Bitter thoughts of Fate's unkind variety
Vex not at all the faithful lover's voice;
Had I leave to choose from our society
The cream of all — still Frida were my choice!
Quoth the Mayor himself, in all his glory,
"Take my Astraea, pearl beyond compare,"
Frida I'd fly to in her upper story,
Hunting moth behind her curtains there.

Homely the breezes through her casement streaming
Homely the dust about her flying feet;
Still there is something angel-like that's beaming
Round my Frida's head, you must admit.
Queenly she stands, her face irradiated
With steam of pails and buckets, gleaming bright;
Yet has no place — as I've already stated —
On the social ladder's topmost height.

Swedish lyrics by Birger Sjöberg
English translation: C.D. Locock 1936

Spanish Moonlight

I Spaniens Månsken

Sometimes my thoughts in fervor teeming
Fly to Granada's courts with moonlight streaming.
Our homely cottage fades then to my seeming
With thatch of turf beside the lake so blue.
'Tis just the night this mood to flatter:
A pair of castanets I'll clatter
And round me in the dance I'll scatter
The strange mad songs that thrill my bosom through.

The village from my sight has faded,
The mayor's domain where poplars stand paraded,
Our lawn as well with lindens shaded
And Swedish lilacs in their dim festoons.
"Caramba!" Hand to hip I'm prancing,
As like a twisted snake advancing
I swing about in desperate dancing
My legs that strain their braided pantaloons.

About my lips the songs are playing
Like waters from the lion fountain spraying
As far from home in fancy straying
I rage, I reel in wild oblivious mood.
A Spanish maid with eyes a-glister
To mad guitar notes is my sister.
A thousand times methinks I 've kissed her —
So full of ardor is the southern blood!

No more by neighbors here surrounded,
"Caramba!" now I cry. How fine it sounded!
But suddenly I stand dumbfounded —
'Mid dusky orbs I meet a glance of blue.
The gusts of passion pass from o'er me.
Methought that Frida stood before me
With eyes reproachful to implore me:
"Such violent courses are not good for you."

Collapsed the castles of my dreaming
And quenched the glories from Granada streaming.
I see again our cottage gleaming;
Primrose and corn-flower meadows bloom below.
We roam through fields as fresh as Eden's.
Oh, never let the thought find credence
Another moon is fair as Sweden's,
Though Spanish moonlight more intensely glow!

Birger Sjöberg
English translation: Charles Wharton Stork

Bride Waltz

Brudvals

Sound accordion, clarinet, fiddles and flute —
Come and waltz with me, sweet, because you are so cute!
Only rarely one dances
At weddings and balls
With such sweet ladies as here in these halls.
But you are one of the few
Who are sweetest, it's true —
In this business of choosing I'm older than you.
For the sweetest brunette in the Nice carnival
Did a waltz once with Rönnerdahl!

Hush, the players have changed to a low, minor tune
That makes goblins and pixies dance under the moon.
And in meadows and fields round our house gay with light
Fairies dance in the dawning spring night.
Flowers cover the earth for our bride
Who expectantly blushing would hide.
Let us play, let us dream then where happiness dwells —
How our next meeting falls no one tells.

Evert Taube

English translation: Lars Forssell and Martin S. Allwood

Linnéa

I have written to my sweetheart, I have written to my friend,
On the nineteenth of this month I got her answer.
I have beautified her little room with leaves and eglantine
And the walls are hung with pictures mighty fine.

And her name is the most beautiful of all a girl could get,
For Linnéa is the fairest name I know of.
It's the one the King of Flowers under towering fir-trees met,
It's the fairest name that any girl could get.

I have sailed around the world and I have had a lot of fun,
I have looked at many ladies pretty closely.
When my cash was gone, back to the ship alone I had to run —
I've regretted many a deed that I have done.

But the girlfriend who is faithful to the one she gave her vow
Must have power o'er the winds and o'er the ocean.
When you take her picture from your box, and look upon it now
Then you feel that none could be so sweet, somehow.

And I feel how she is tempting me and wanting me to come
When I see that picture of my Swedish darling.
Those who always stay ashore
and with their sweethearts spend their day
Never know how sailors feel — oh, far away!

Turning in in soaking rags down in a miserable hole
And then out again — aloft, in shrieking weather!
When the grey Atlantic whirls around its devils in the squall —
And the sailor always ready at the call.

But from Baltimore to Vinga our voyage was a dance,
And I hope that my Linnéa has been faithful.
For ashore one may encounter sharks in sweet and false disguise,
And a sailor may be cheated of his prize.

In my cottage down in Bohuslän I'm waiting for my friend,
I have promised her to marry and be faithful.
I have beautified her little room with leaves and eglantine
And the walls are hung with pictures mighty fine.

Evert Taube

English translation: Lars Forssell and Martin S. Allwood

Oh, It Is Divine To Linger

Här Är Gudagott Att Vara

Oh, it is divine to linger
Mid the beauty life bestows!
Hark, the joyful wingèd singer!
See the grass — how green it grows!
Bees are humming, beetles glowing,
Larks do sing in heaven's blue,
And from cups with nectar flowing
Little flowers drink to you.

Gunnar Wennerberg
English translation: Martin S. Allwood